

The Arrival in London

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original English



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THE evening of his arrival in London, Monday, September 4th, 1911, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: Heaven has blessed this day. It was said that London should be a place for a great proclamation of the Faith. I was tired when I went on board the steamer, but when I reached London and beheld the faces of the friends my fatigue left me. Your great love refreshes me. I am very pleased with the English friends.

The feeling that existed between the East and the West is changing in the Light of Bahá’u’lláh’s teaching. It used to be such that if an Occidental drank from the cup of an Oriental the cup would be considered polluted and would be broken. Now when a Western Bahá’í dines with an Eastern Bahá’í the vessels and the plates that he has used are kept apart and revered in his memory. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá then gave this historic instance of wonderful brotherly love:

One day some soldiers came to the house of a Bahá’í and demanded that one of the guests should be given up for execution, according to their warrant. The host took his guest’s place and died in his stead.

London

The magnet of your love brought me to this country. My hope is that the Divine Light may shine here, and that the Heavenly Star of Bahá’u’lláh may strengthen you, so that you may be the cause of the oneness of humanity, that you may help to make the darkness of superstition and prejudice disappear and unite all creeds and nations.

This is a brilliant century. Eyes are now open to the beauty of the oneness of humanity, of love and of brotherhood. The darkness of suppression will disappear and the light of unity will shine. We cannot bring love and unity to pass merely by talking of it. Knowledge is not enough. Wealth, science, education are good, we know: but we must also work and study to bring to maturity the fruit of knowledge.

Knowledge is the first step; resolve, the second step; action, its fulfillment, is the third step. To construct a building one must first of all make a plan, then one must have the power (money), then one can build. A society of Unity is formed, that is good — but meetings and discussions are not enough. In Egypt these meetings take place but there is only talk and no result. These



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meetings here in London are good, the knowledge and the intention are good, but how can there be a result without action? Today the force for Unity is the Holy Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh. He manifested this spirit of Unity. Bahá'u'lláh brings East and West together. Go back, search history, you will not find a precedent for this.

Differences

God has created the world as one — the boundaries are marked out by man. God has not divided the lands, but each man has his house and meadow; horses and dogs do not divide the fields into parts. That is why Bahá'u'lláh says: "Let not a man glory in that he loves his country, but that he loves his kind." All are of one family, one race; all are human beings. Differences as to the partition of lands should not be the cause of separation among the people.

One of the great reasons of separation is colour. Look how this prejudice has power in America, for instance. See how they hate one another! Animals do not quarrel because of their colour! Surely man who is so much higher in creation, should not be lower than the animals. Think over this. What ignorance exists! White doves do not quarrel with blue doves because of their colour, but white men fight with dark-coloured men. This racial prejudice is the worst of all.

The Old Testament says that God created man like unto His own image; in the Qur'án it says: "There is no difference in the Creation of God!" Think well, God has created all, cares for all, and all are under His protection. The policy of God is better than our policy. We are not as wise as God!

Religion

To most men who have not heard the message of this teaching, religion seems an outward form, a pretence, merely a seal of respectability. Some priests are in holy office for no other reason than to gain their living. They themselves do not believe in the religion they pretend to teach. Would these men lay down their lives for their faith? Ask a Christian of this kind to deny Christ in order to save his life, and he will do it.

Ask a Bahá'í to deny any of the great Prophets, to deny his faith or to deny Moses, Muḥammad or Christ, and he will say: I would rather die. So a Muḥammadan Bahá'í is a better Christian than many so called Christians.

A Bahá'í denies no religion; he accepts the Truth in all, and would die to uphold it. He loves all men as his brothers, of whatever class, of whatever race or nationality, of whatever creed or colour, whether good or bad, rich or poor, beautiful or hideous. He commits no violence; if he is struck he does not return the blow. He calls nothing bad, following the example of the Lord Bahá'u'lláh. As a safeguard against intemperance he does not drink wine or spirits. Bahá'u'lláh has said it is not good for a sane man to take that which will destroy his health and sense.

The religion of God has two aspects in this world. The spiritual (the real) and the formal (the outward). The formal side changes, as man changes from age to age. The spiritual side which is the Truth, never changes. The Prophets and Manifestations of God bring always the same teaching; at first men cling to the Truth but after a time they disfigure it. The Truth is distorted

by man-made outward forms and material laws. The veil of substance and worldliness is drawn across the reality of Truth.

As Moses and Jesus brought their Message to the people, so Bahá'u'lláh brings the same Message.

Each time God sends a Great One to us we are given new life, but the Truth each Manifestation brings is the same. The Truth never changes but man's vision changes. It is dulled and confused by the complication of outward forms.

The Truth is easy to understand although the outward forms in which it is expressed bewilder the intelligence. As men grow they see the futility of man-made forms and despise them. Therefore many leave the churches, because the latter often emphasize the external only.

